

Walter Gellhorn, Betts Professor of Law at Columbia University, has intensively studied both foreign and American practices in dealing with grievances about governmental action. He has been able to draw also on broad personal experience in public administration, for he has served as a member of the Council of the Administrative Conference of the United States and has held posts in the Social Security Administration, the Justice and Interior Departments, the Office of Price Administration, the National War Labor Board, and various state and municipal bodies. He is a past president of the Association of American Law Schools and a member of the National Academy of Arbitrators and the American Society for Public Administration. Mr. Gellhorn's previous books include *Federal Administrative Proceedings*; *American Rights: The Constitution in Action*; and *Individual Freedom and Governmental Restraints*.

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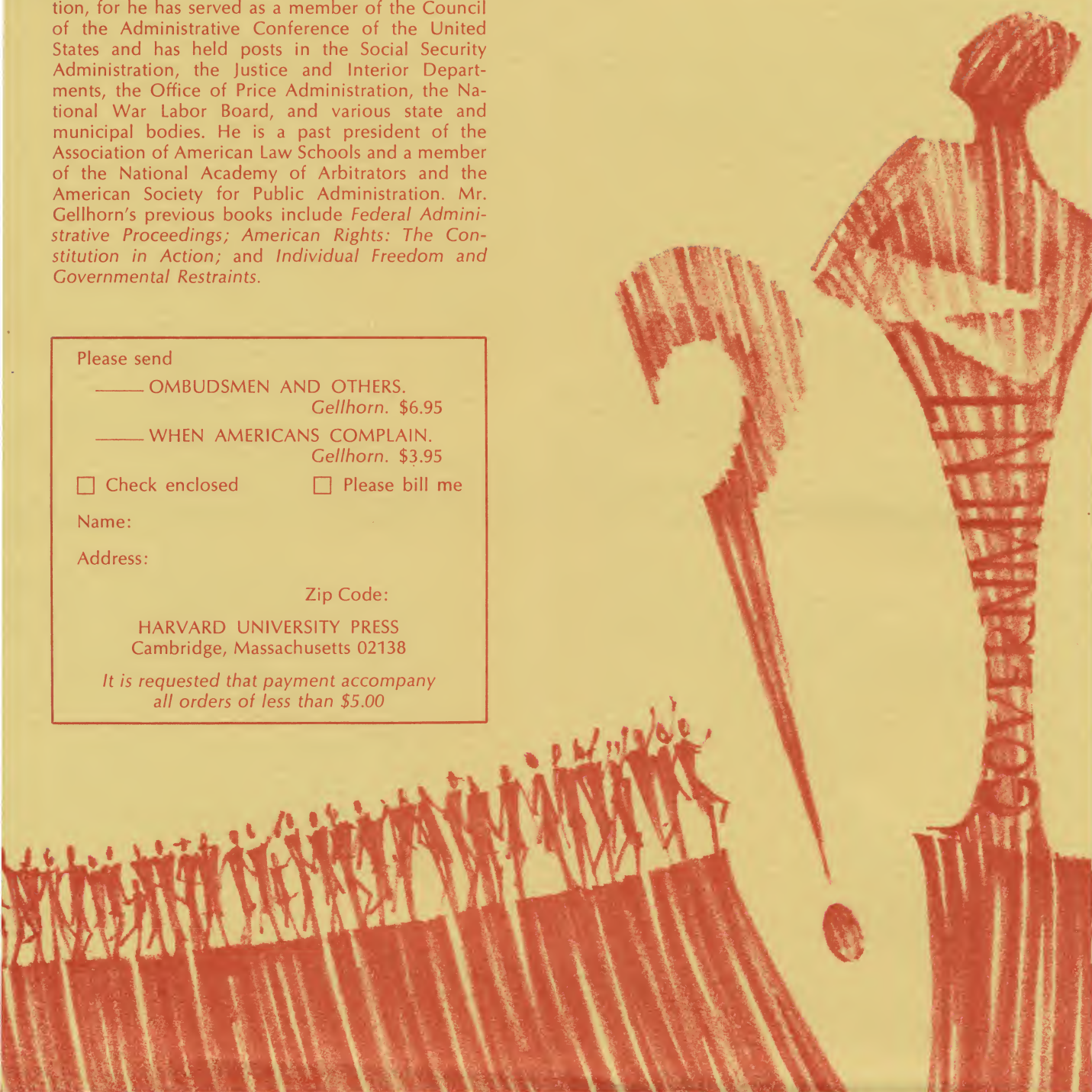
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"The headlines of late have been given to the role of the public protector, individual or group, who would alert us to skullduggery in government at any level . . . Now Mr. Gellhorn, through diligent personal research, lays before us the good and bad of the public protector as he operates in nine countries. He has done the homework for all of us, and he has let those who live with the ombudsman relate what it's all about. This is not only a document of the past; it also carefully links the present with what could happen in the future."

— *The New York Times*

"Ombudsmen have existed in Sweden since 1809, and in recent years have been appointed also in Finland, Denmark, Norway and New Zealand . . . In Sweden and Finland ombudsmen may hale offenders into court. In Norway and New Zealand their only weapon is exposure and public opinion, but these have hitherto proved highly effective . . . Akin to the ombudsmen, though not quite as independent, is the grievance bureau used in Japan, the State Comptroller's Office in Israel, which also investigates complaints against public officials, and the procurators in the Soviet Union, Poland and Yugoslavia, who investigate citizens' complaints.

"Now the system is being suggested for the United States . . . these two books by Professor Walter Gellhorn . . . could hardly have appeared at a more opportune time."

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WHEN AMERICANS COMPLAIN

Governmental Grievance Procedures

"The strongest argument for American ombudsmen comes from Columbia Law Professor Walter Gellhorn, top U.S. scholar on the subject . . . Although the U.S. is rich in responsive administrators and procedural safeguards against official abuse, says Gellhorn, the country's channels of complaint are so clogged that citizens either get no hearing or win isolated victories that rarely cure the root causes of their grievances.

"Congress receives 100,000 letters a day, a vast percentage of them constituents' requests . . . Judicial rules bar many grievances from the courtroom; litigation is also costly and time-consuming . . . All of which leaves many Americans voiceless, notably the poor, who cannot cope with faceless welfare agencies or constructively vent their real or imagined complaints against big-city police."

— *Time*

"*When Americans Complain* . . . should become indispensable in analyzing our problem: Do we need an Ombudsman here in the United States? . . . [The] book presents some formidable issues which must be explored.

"*When Americans Complain* presents a comprehensive and quantitative analysis of citizen complaints at all levels of government — national, state and local. Gellhorn treats each level with equal care and length . . . In the best of circumstances, Gellhorn suggests, 'haphazard complaint-handling by legislators, gubernatorial officers and other public officials gives slight assurance that a grievance will be fully investigated.'"

— Senator Edward V. Long in *The New York Times Book Review*

(LC66-23466) viii + 239 pp. \$3.95

By Walter Gellhorn